

The CURRENT

STONY CREEK'S HOME AND SCHOOL MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2011

From the Principal's Desk

On Friday evening, November 18th, the Stony Creek Community ushered in the Holiday Season with our Fourth Annual Giving Night. What an enthusiastic crowd who came out to support this generous community service outreach! Once again, thanks to the PTO Committee who planned for such a fine, meaningful evening for our students, families, and staff. All in attendance would agree that the evening was quite special!

I want to thank our parents for their participation in our Fall Parent and Teacher Conferences. Though short, these conversations between parents and teachers allow for a healthy exchange of information to benefit our students' learning. I trust that you found your conference to be informative and helpful in supporting your child's education here at Stony Creek Elementary School.

As we celebrate Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Christmas, and New Year's, we join with family and friends, break bread together, exchange gifts, and reminisce about years' past and the year to come. While we have a diverse community here at Stony Creek and celebrate a wide range of holidays, we are all united by the common focus on family, friends, peace, and hope! Whether you celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah, or Kwanzaa, may you enjoy a beautiful holiday season with family and friends! Happy New Year as well!

Gary W. Abbamont

STONY CREEK'S UPCOMING EVENTS

DECEMBER

- 2 Early Closing, 11:45 AM (K-5), End of First Trimester
- 12 Winter Concert Assembly at SC, 9:00 AM
- 13 Winter Concert at WHS, 7 PM
- 13 PTO Holiday Shop (During Recess)
- 14 PTO Holiday Shop (During Recess)
- 15 PTO Holiday Shop (During Recess)
- 15 Progress Reports Sent Home K-5 (Via the Students)
- 26 Winter Recess Begins – All Schools Closed

JANUARY

- 2 Students Return from Winter Recess
- 12 PTO Family Night/Book Exchange, 6:30 PM
- 13 Professional Staff In-Service Day (All Schools Closed)
- 16 Martin L. King, Jr. Holiday – All Schools Closed
- 19 PTO Family Fun Night (Snow Date for 11/12 Event)



From the Counselor's Desk

From time to time families may need a little support. If you are experiencing struggles due to your current economic situation, please call me, Mrs. Walsh, Stony Creek Counselor, Extension 2606. I will help direct you to appropriate resources or may be able to assist you directly depending upon your family needs. All conversations are handled with discretion and confidentiality.

Our Parent Drop-off & Pick-up Line

As you know, each morning and afternoon we have a fair number of parent vehicles that either drop-off or pick-up students. We ask that drivers DO NOT use cell phones while students are in the process of departing or loading. Student safety is our utmost concern, and every driver must be fully attentive while in our parking lot.

Lost and Found – A Challenge This Coat Belongs To...

As the cooler temperatures have arrived in our area, students are more likely to be wearing heavy sweatshirts, jackets, and coats – even mittens, gloves, headbands, and hats. Unfortunately, many of these are left behind each day, and I find our stage is filled with “lost” items. The vast majority of these items do not have the child’s name and class (e.g. 1G, 1J, 1K, etc.) marked inside with a Sharpie pen. If these items were labeled, we could easily return them to their owners. So, please help us and label these items with your child’s NAME & CLASS.

lost and found

American Education Week

I want to thank our Stony Creek parents for taking the time to visit our classrooms on November 15th! It was our pleasure to welcome nearly 200 parents to Stony Creek during the day. I trust that you found your visit to our classrooms to be both informative and enjoyable. Once again, thanks for making the time to spend some time with our students and staff.

Fall Conference Session

On November 21, 22 and 23, we had our Fall Parent-Teacher Conference Session. I am pleased that these conferences served as valuable opportunities to share information about our students and their progress both academically and as members of this learning community. Thanks for your on-going support of our program here at Stony Creek Elementary School.

Upcoming Winter Concert



On the evening of December 13th, our instrumental, string, and vocal ensembles will perform our winter concert at Wissahickon High School. Our students are eager to showcase their fine work for the family and friends of Stony Creek. The concert begins promptly at 7 PM. Please join us!

Progress Reports K-5



Our Fall Parent-Teacher Conferences allowed for some valuable conversations about our students’ progress and included a focus on academics, work habits, and social skills. On December 15 you will receive your child’s first Progress Report of the school year; it will

include specific information as to your child’s academic performance and his/her qualities as a learner. The Teacher’s anecdotal comments are no longer included in our district’s elementary school progress reports. Instead, this kind of information is communicated to parents at the Parent-Teacher Conference and throughout the year as necessary.

This year your child’s Progress Report will come home in an envelope. It will include the Progress Report plus any other progress reports as applicable - Enrichment, ESL Learning Support, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and/or Speech. You will keep the Progress Reports, sign the envelope by Trimester I and return the envelope to your child’s teacher the following day.

Emergency Dismissal Plan

What happens when school needs to close early?

In the event that school needs to close early due to

Operation Santa

Student Council will be sponsoring this year's annual toy drive from **Monday, December 5th** to **Monday, December 12th**. All toys will be donated to Operation Santa. The mission of Operation Santa is to enhance the holiday experience for area military families that truly need it, and for the past 44 years, it has been a morale booster for all. Operation Santa runs year round, not only helping eligible service members during the holidays, but also those returning at any time from overseas deployments-they can pick out toys to bring home to their loved ones.



We will be accepting new and gently used toys, video games, puzzles, etc. You can also donate scarves, gloves and hats for the children. Please do not wrap the gifts. There will be a bin in front of the library to put your donations. Thanks for all that you do!

HEALTHY, HEALTHY, HEALTHY

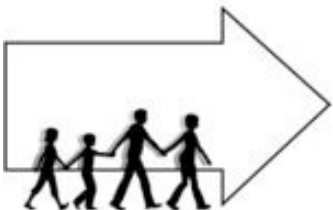
The Wissahickon School District has a Wellness Policy designed to emphasize the value of healthy living. As such, we at Stony Creek have a committee designed to promote healthy choices right here at the school level. This year we have two initiatives in place toward this end, and I wanted to share them with you.



Healthy Snacks

Healthy Snacks:

We have spoken with students about the value of healthy “veggie” and “fruit” snacks and have been tracking these kinds of snacks in each homeroom. It has certainly raised student consciousness, and we have found more students bringing such items for their daily snack. I encourage your support of this message at home.



Regular Exercise:

When students arrive at school on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, all students enter a walking path on one of our two blacktops. The K-2 students walk on one blacktop while the 3-5 students walk on the other. We are pleased that our students are able to start their day with some healthy exercise. Let's get our bodies and minds working!

inclement weather, *School Messenger*, our district's automated communication system, notifies parents electronically (see article below).

In the event that school closes early, the school will follow the parent's plan for dismissal. Parents were able to designate one of these options on the form that was sent home in early November:

- *My child will ride his/her assigned bus home.*
- *My child will be picked up by parent/guardian.*
- *My child is a walker and will walk home.*

The YMCA After School Program is not an option as this program is canceled in such early closings due to inclement weather.

School Messenger

School Messenger is the automated telephone system that our district uses in order to contact families with important announcements and emergency notifications. With this system parents are able to determine how they are notified: by telephone, cell phone, e-mail, text message, or some combination of them. Parents are also responsible for updating the method of communication. Did your cell phone number change? Log on and make the change yourself. See the "how to" update School Messenger later in this newsletter.

Home and School Communication

There are many ways at Stony Creek to maintain strong home and school communication. Consider the many ways to keep in touch with the happenings at Stony Creek.

- E-Mail
- Telephone
- Note
- Conference
- School Newsletters
- District/School Web Page
- Principal's Blog (on the school's web page)

In addition to these forms of communication, you can also receive some very helpful and important in these ways.

- e-Notify: (Important information e-mailed to you.)
- School Messenger: (Important information, including emergency school closing and delay information, communicated to you via e-mail, text, phone, etc.)
- This Week at Stony Creek: (Weekly e-mail providing you with information for the upcoming week at Stony Creek.)

Later in this newsletter are the directions for registering for these communication services.

Resources on Our Web Page

Log on to the Stony Creek web page and look for the newest addition: RESOURCES on the left hand side in the navy blue rectangle. Click on it, and what will you find

there:

- Stony Creek Parent Handbook 2011=2012
- Home and School Communication Sources 2011-2012
- WSD Curriculum Overviews by Grade Level

Here is the link:

<http://www.wsdweb.org/page.cfm?p=2203>

Safety at Stony Creek

As Principal of Stony Creek, it is my responsibility to ensure the safety of our students and staff each and every day at our school. Toward that end, there are standard emergency drills practiced regularly by our students and staff. The following drills will occur throughout the year, and I wanted you to be knowledgeable of them!

Evacuation Drills (Monthly)

Intruder Drills (Seasonally)

Severe Weather Drills (Seasonally)

School Emergency Response Team (Medical

Emergency - Staff Only)

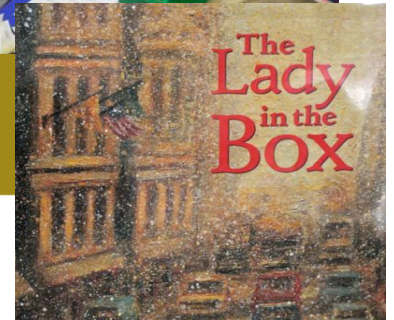
Bus Evacuation Drills (Fall)

These drills are familiar to our students in grades 1-5; however, our kindergarten students will experience these drills for the first time this year. I plan to send a note home with kindergarten students on the day when we conduct the Intruder and Severe Weather Drills for the first time. This way parents can discuss the drill with their children.



...giving night 2011

Giving Night 2011 was a great success in which both "receivers and givers" benefited. Thanks, Stony Creek, for a great evening.



STONY CREEK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HOME AND SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

All of us at Stony Creek highly value the communication between our school and the home. In our efforts to communicate information in a timely and efficient manner, we have various approaches to communication. I strongly encourage you to make each approach a part of the school's communication with your home! One of our most important forms of communication is the district website: wsdweb.org. Be sure to visit it for information about our district.

Gary W. Abbamont
Principal

SCHOOL MESSENGER

SchoolMessenger is the district's emergency notification system. This is the system that sends out calls and text messages for snow closings and absences. The district will send out a letter with individualized account information for signing up to SchoolMessenger. If you have lost your letter or your activation code has expired, please go to our district website (<http://www.wsdweb.org/page.cfm?p=1909>) for assistance. Once you are registered in the system you can inform the system as to the best ways to communicate with your family (phone call, text message, e-mail). Once registered, you can go into the system with your password and change how you receive the information from School Messenger.

Visit wsdweb.org and click on **FOR PARENTS** button; go to School Messenger Account Help. New parents will receive a letter and activation code to set up an account with WSD.



E-NOTIFY

The new website has a communication tool, eNotify, built into the interface. eNotify allows visitors to the site to receive email communication when news or events are added or changed on the website. eNotify can send out newsletters and other types of information through a central distribution list.

Signing up for eNotify will give you the following:

- Newsletter Subscriptions Delivery Locations (Use multiple emails for one account)

In addition, registered users can receive Site Alerts for:

- News Updates
- Postponements & Cancellations
- Calendar Event Reminders
- Postponements & Cancellations

In order to sign up for eNotify you will need to follow the steps below:

1. Click [Subscribe](#)
2. Fill out the information under New User using the email you want to receive information on. Your email address becomes your username
3. Select the mailing lists you would like to be on. You can change these anytime you want or unsubscribe from all of them by logging back in.
4. The district respects the privacy of the information you submit.

Note: Once you have your account set-up, click the [eNotify](#) link to make changes to your account or check for posted messages.

TheCURRENT

Each month of the school year, September through June, I publish a home and school newsletter entitled, *TheCURRENT*. This publication contains important school-based information related to upcoming events, important announcements, reminders about various school routines, and any other information deemed important to share with our families. *TheCURRENT* is published monthly and will be sent via eNotify if you have registered with that service; it will always be available on the district website on the Stony Creek page under Newsletters. We do not send home *TheCURRENT* in paper form as we are working hard to go *Green*!



THIS WEEK AT STONY CREEK

Each weekend (usually on Sundays), Mrs. Suchodolski, a member of the PTO Executive Board, organizes an electronic publication that is sent out via e-mail to those families who register to receive it. It contains school information related to the upcoming week. In this publication you will find important announcements, the week's schedule, a note from the nurse and upcoming event information. Parents find this publication very helpful. You can register to receive this publication at multiple e-mail addresses. We are most appreciative of Mrs. Suchodolski's volunteer efforts to make this publication happen each week at Stony Creek.



This Week at Stony Creek



On Sundays...

(sent via e-mail to registered families)

▼ Sunday

 Stony Creek Elementary
This Week at Stony Creek September 13-17

Sun, 12:40 PM

Announcements

Thursday 9/16 (Day 11A)

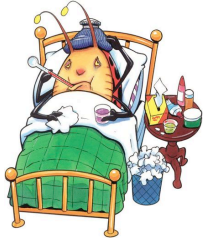
A Note from the Nurse...

Upcoming Dates...

E-mail Tracy Suchodolski (parent)
with your e-mail to this address:
such991@comcast.net

For Your Information

In this section of TheCURRENT, I have included some of the important day to day reminders about the procedures in place at Stony Creek.



ABSENCE

When your child is going to be absent from school, you are expected to call our school (215.619.8108) and report the absence. Include the name of your child, teacher's name, and reason for absence. This should be done the night before or prior to 8 in the morning. Also, be sure to send in a note when your child returns to school. A note is required if the absence is to be considered an "excused" absence.

BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays are special days for our students, and we will honor them with a short celebration to mark the day. Parents are expected to be mindful of the district's nutritional policy as well as the dietary/allergy restrictions of students in the classroom. Class birthday recognitions are short (ten minutes) and limited to the classroom community. Teachers will generate a list of healthy snacks that appeal to the class and communicate this list to parents. Parents are asked to drop off the treats in the main office, and these treats will be delivered to the classroom by our staff. Small Gift Items/Goody Bags/Bouquets of Flowers/Balloons are not permitted. For obvious reasons, birthday party invitations are not to be distributed at school.



CHANGE OF DISMISSAL PLAN

If a parent/guardian wishes to change a student's mode of dismissal (i.e.- walker, bus rider, parent pick up, etc.) it is necessary to write a note to the classroom teacher explaining the change. However, parents/guardians are reminded that students may ride only that bus to which they have been assigned. The teacher will forward the note to the office where it will be kept on file. Requests for students to change buses in order to visit friends after school cannot be honored since most of our school busses are at or near capacity. However, if they will be picked up as car riders or walkers, a note will be needed from both sending and receiving parents.



Any individual, to whom children may be dismissed, must be identified on the *Emergency Information Card*. Please write additional names and phone numbers on the reverse side of the card if necessary. Students will be released only to those individuals whose names are on the emergency card. If for any reason the adult picking up your child is not listed on the emergency card, you must send a dated note to the office of this change. The adult will need to show a form of identification to the staff at the school.

DISMISSAL

We have several dismissal options on a typical school day. The Stony Creek staff supervise all forms of dismissal. Walkers (Our walkers are dismissed from the front doors closest to our kindergarten classrooms.) Parent Pick-up (Parents picking up a child at the end of the day should pull their car into the parking lot closest to the center of the building. Parents wait their turn to move up to the top of the horseshoe driveway and wait for their child to be dismissed by our staff.) Bus (Students will be escorted to their busses by members of our staff.) YMCA (Students attending our After School Program will be dismissed to the program by their teachers.)



EARLY PICK-UP

If you need to pick up your child prior to dismissal time (3:15 PM), you need to come to the main office to do so. Such pickups should take place no later than 2:55 PM. After this time, bus arrivals and student dismissal routines go into effect, and it is too disruptive to make a change.



FAMILY TRAVEL

Our district attendance policy allows for up to 5 days of non-sponsored school travel. As with any absence, you must notify the school in writing of your intention to remove your child from school for this purpose. You will receive an acknowledgement of this request from my office. Remember, however, a total of 10 or more days of absence (including days for non-sponsored school travel) in one school year is considered excessive and cause for concern.

SCHOOL HOURS

Full Day of School

| | |
|---------|--|
| 7:45 AM | Early Morning Music Students Drop Off Time |
| 8:20 AM | Drop Off Time for All Students K-5 Begins |
| 8:35 AM | Official Start of School Day |
| 3:15 PM | Official End of School Day |



Early Closing Day of School (No Lunch or Recess on Early Closing Days.)

| | |
|----------|--|
| 7:45 AM | Early Morning Music Students Drop Off Time |
| 8:20 AM | Drop Off Time for All Students K-5 |
| 8:35 AM | Official Start of School Day |
| 11:50 AM | Official End of School Day |

LUNCH

Children may purchase a hot lunch. The cost of a lunch is \$2.55. For those who bring their lunches, milk may be purchased for \$.50. Lunch menus are published monthly on the district website and a hard copy will be sent home with your child. Please refer to the Chartwells menu for available lunch and snack options throughout the month. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to see that the child has the money to purchase lunch or to bring a nourishing meal.



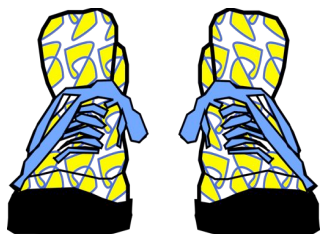
The Wissahickon School District utilizes a Point of Purchase computerized system in the cafeteria. Money for lunches and snacks may be sent to school on a weekly or monthly basis. The money will be entered into the student's cafeteria account. All students will be given a PIN Number to access their accounts at lunchtime. Snacks and lunch funds should be sent to school by check, payable to "WSD Cafeteria Account". Please include your child's name on the check. Parents and guardians are encouraged to use the Point of Purchase system because it greatly increases the efficiency of the lunch lines and reduces the incidence of lost or missing money. Parents are encouraged to make on-line payments at www.mynutrikids.com.

PTO FAMILY DIRECTORY

Directory will provide contact information for our families. This directory was recently published and sent home with students. This is the one resource parents like in order to contact other families for birthday parties, play dates, and the like. Information regarding the PTO Family Directory was sent home at the start of the school year.

SNACKS

Snacks must be simple and healthy according to our district wellness policy. Our teachers will encourage healthy snack choices. Generally, our students eat their snacks while engaged in some productive learning activity. Once again, healthy snacks are strongly encouraged.



SNEAKERS

Our students enjoy an active day at school. Each and every day our students enjoy a short recess at the start of the school day (8:20-8:30 AM) as well as their lunchtime recess (20-25 minutes). Given this level of activity and physical education classes on some days, sneakers are the expected footwear at Stony Creek.



TARDY

If your child arrives late to school, you must park your car and accompany your child into the main office. You need to sign your child in with a member of our office staff.

TheCURRENT and THIS WEEK AT STONY CREEK

School newsletters are published on a regular basis to share news and important information about our school community. Stony Creek's TheCURRENT is the monthly home and school newsletter, and it is posted on our school website; it is also sent you electronically if you sign up with *School Messenger* (see below) and provide an e-mail address. This Week at Stony Creek is an electronic publication e-mailed usually on Sunday evenings providing important information related to the coming week. Contact Tracy Suchodolski at such991@comcast.net in order to be added to the e-mail distribution list.

School Messenger

Emergency Notification System for WSD

School Messenger is the automated telephone system that our district uses in order to contact families with important announcements and emergency notifications. Using this system, parents are able to customize the way that they receive these important notifications. Make sure that you are enrolled in School Messenger and that you keep your information updated.

How do I register with School Messenger?

- Enter the following URL into your web browser: <https://contactme.schoolmessenger.com>
- Click the **Sign Up Now** link near the bottom of the page.
- You will be taken to the Sign Up page where you will need to enter a valid e-mail address, a password, your name, and zip code. You'll use your e-mail address and the password you enter here to sign in later. Check **E-Mail Me** when I have a new phone message if you would like to receive an e-mail message each time there is a new message in your mailbox. Click **Create Account** when you are done.
- Next, you should check your e-mail. There will be an Account Activation e-mail from contactme@schoolmessenger.com which contains a link to activate your account. This link will take you to a confirmation page where you must enter your password in order to activate your account. If you don't see the e-mail, check your Junk Mail and spam folders.
- Once you've activated your account, you're ready to add your child(ren) to the account. You should have received an individualized letter for each child. Don't discard the additional letter(s) until you have added them to your account. Click the link on the main page and add your child's student ID and Activation Code.
- When you have finished adding your child(ren) to the account, you will be brought to the **Edit Contact Details** page where you can simply check which types of messages you would like to receive and at which phone number or e-mail address. Make sure that you click **Save** when you are done making changes. If you have other children in the district, you will be able to add them to the same Contact Manager account as soon as you receive their Student ID and Activation Code.

Important Note: *You should only give your work number if it directly dials to your desk. The system is not able to dial an extension if an auto-attendant answers or ask for you if a receptionist answers. Therefore, you should only provide a work number if it is a direct line.*